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ters, subscribed, "A Freeholder." His superiority on every occasion to the counsellor on the opposite side, was manifest. Mr. Dunkin appeared a knowing attorney, rather than an intelligent lawyer; yet, when these antagonists sought for fortune and fame in India, this same Mr. Dunkin worked his way to the second seat on the bench, and the honour of knight-hood; while Boyd, a man of great endowments, and attended with large expectations, whether by not having furnished himself with an East Indian conscience, or from want of patronage, or from private imprudencies, dwindled at length into the publisher of a periodical paper, and died in the midst of increasing embarrassments. Such is the *Phantasmagoria* of human life, nor do I wish to draw any resemblance that may have taken place between the downward fame of the county, and the declining character of the individual.

With respect to the *country* at large, and particularly its relation to America, the following letter was penned just before one great crisis, and this empire seems now to be on the eve of another, and both occasioned principally by the interference of France. Much is it to be feared, that the same systematic perverseness which drove America to the necessity of constitutional, may force her, less unwillingly, to the practical display of commercial independence, that is, a self-dependence founded on the product of her own agriculture, and the increasing activity and supply, of her own manufactures. I well know that analogies between the individual and the nation are often more fanciful than philosophical; yet America, in its adolescence when the letter was written, is advancing fast to the maturity of manhood. While the whole Western world is labouring

with change and revolution, and the United States are about to command its destinies, "by an enlarged philanthropy, and an enlightened forecast," a ministry of "existing circumstances," without views, either retrospective, or prospective, are continuing the very same system of provocation which was pursued in the year 1777, and pertinaciously repeating the same process in alienating IRELAND, which once before dissevered the empire, and lost AMERICA.

A. P.

London, Norfolk-St. Feb. 28th, 1777.

DEAR SIR,

I am much obliged to you for your very friendly letter, which I received the beginning of this month: and which I should certainly sooner have acknowledged, if I had time or matter to send you a letter, such as you pay me the compliment of expecting. But my time has been very little my own, lately at least; among other reasons from the hurry of removing from the country to our present residence in London, an operation which even in small families is attended with not a little trouble.

As to materials for writing, the political world, instead of its usual fruitfulness of events in this busy season of the year, has been almost barren. At best, the few matters that are brought forth, are of such uncertain nature and appearance, that they may rather be called false conceptions, than any thing to decide or depend on. When a ship arrives from America, pregnant as the public expect with intelligence, the ministerial midwives contrive at least to maim it, if not stifle it in its birth; or if they cannot effect that, they swathe and swaddle it so in their gazette,—cradle of state, that it is impossible to discover it clearly or satisfactorily. And this unfairness,

not confining it to the enemy, they practice, more criminally perhaps, even against their own arms, and their own generals. A remarkable instance of this occurs in the misrepresentation of General Clinton, by a mutilated publication of his own letter on the attack of Charlestown, when he and Parker were repulsed by Lee. Probably you remember the circumstance: if not, it is worth referring to in the Gazettes of that time. I mention it now, because Clinton is every day expected from Rhode Island in the Asia; and will probably hint to some of our state-publishers his displeasure at being so injuriously treated. You'll see that only two paragraphs of his letter are stated in the Gazette, expressing some mistake or misinformation of the depth of the water he was to cross. The universal inference on reading this candid Gazette, was a severe censure on General Clinton, for this criminal ignorance, which was supposed to have ruined and disappointed the whole measure of the attack. How provoking this unjust censure must have been to Clinton and his friends, you will judge when you know that the insinuation was totally false; and that Clinton, instead of remaining in an ignorance which would have been criminal, lost not a moment in informing himself of the situation, and actually tried it himself, walking in up to the chin, till he found it impassable. The officer whom he at first sent to sound it, had made a mistake, and sent word it was only 17 inches deep in crossing; thinking he had gotten on the island, when in fact he was only on a bank of sand: but Clinton guessed the account to be erroneous, and instantly satisfied himself. The failure was owing not to any ignorance or inactivity of his, for the contrary were remarkable, but to the miscarriage of some bat-

teaux, which Clinton had applied for to Parker, for the purpose of carrying over the troops. Not a syllable of these explanatory, and indeed praise-worthy particulars, appeared in the Gazette; but one or two naked paragraphs, cut out of a long letter, throwing by this "*suppressio veri*," a false and calumnious suggestion on a brave officer. But I have involved you in a longer detail than I expected. To atone for its tediousness, let me wind it up with Charles Fox's sarcasm on the subject. He asserted, "that the minister who authorized the publication of that scandalous Gazette, was himself either criminally ignorant, or wickedly malicious;—that it was the coward's characteristic to traduce the brave, and that none could do so, who were not insensible to the merits of character, and *careless of military honour*." (You know that Ld. G. Germaine is Secretary for the Colony-department.)

This session has been less adorned with eloquence than any I remember for some years. Mr. Burke has spoken but once, I need not add, that he spoke incomparably well. Besides the superior brilliancy of his style and sentiment, he is so much more comprehensive, so much wider in his range, both of fact and argument, in short, so much more master of his subject, and of all the possible methods in which it may be treated, than any other speaker, that, in my mind at least, comparison is totally out of the question. The debate was an unexpected one, and therefore perhaps the more animated; on a motion from the minority, for Parliament to adopt a lenient proclamation of the Howes; which promised to the Americans, "a revival of certain instructions to the governors, on the part of the King, and his concurrence in revising the grievous Acts of Parliament." The

proclamation certainly was more decent and equitable than most of their productions; though by no means sufficiently explicit. Explained, however, and confirmed by Parliament, it might have operated very beneficially, in showing to the Americans that there was at last a little remission from the unconditional tyranny of administration. But the adoption of it was therefore refused: and its sentiments disclaimed. No admission for it, into their *sanctum sanctorum* of intelligence, the Gazette! On the contrary, the High-priests of the Cabinet took particular care to purify themselves from the crime of any thing like equity or moderation. The perpetual theme of their abuse and misrepresentation is the independency of America.

They beat the old ground over and over, "that it was always the object of the colonies, and now that they have thrown off the mask, and are hardened in their guilt of rebellion, they deserve no defence, and admit no palliation." Mr. Burke said, "he did not rise to defend nor to palliate their conduct:—that he could neither justify it nor blame it in argument.—Why? Because it was *necessary*: and necessity was the object neither of praise nor of censure. That their independency was *necessary*, and their declaration of it equally so, was obvious from the first principle and right of nature, self-defence. For that when England proscribed them and their property, deprived them of the protection, and put them under the Ban of the empire; authorizing every piratical adventurer to rob and pillage them by sea and land, they had no refuge but resistance, and no resource to make that resistance effectual but independency: for they could not hope for aid from foreign states, if they acknowledged them-

selves *dependent* upon, that is the subjects of England:—that it was incumbent on them therefore to defend themselves by declared independency, to resist our force with their force, and against our *squirrel* and *grey-hound* to oppose their ALFRED and COLUMBUS." He proved that the declaration of independence was the result more of ministerial misconduct, than of American ambition: for that it was a measure in itself so evil to them, that nothing could make them adopt it but its being a necessary evil:—that they postponed it as long as was possible, anxiously waiting for the promised commission, which was to accommodate and to pacify.—"Why was that boasted commission delayed, seven months after it received the sanction of parliament?—Because it was the object of your systematical tyranny, to drive America, by severity on one hand and delusion on the other, into a conduct which might seem to justify a continuance of your violence.—Why, when the Commissioners were at last sent out, were they not invested with sufficient powers? Why were not the little powers with which they were invested, communicated to Parliament, to give a respect, a credit, an effect to the transaction? Because our violent and unconditional administration wished not any conciliatory or equitable effect to the commission. If they had, they would have used arguments, not arms: they would have offered terms, but not at the point of the sword and the bayonet." He took a very wide view, and stated in the strongest light, both the injustice and impolicy of the public proceedings against America. To the latter consideration, the danger of a war with France concurred. An evil, which he stated was necessarily to fall on this country, and suspended only

by the accidental derangement of French politics; but that the natural disposition of France, her particular resentments for the disgraces of last war, and her general interest, must concur to take advantage of our calamity."

Whether it be the *interest* of France that our colonies should be detached from us, is a point much disputed. Those who maintain the affirmative, argue, that whatever depresses England, must elevate France in the same proportion, rivals as they are in power and dominion, and in many branches of trade:—that the free ports of America would communicate with France many commodities most important to both those countries; receiving from France her wines, silks, &c. and sending in exchange, corn, fish, and *all sorts of naval stores*: that with *that unlimited opportunity of cheap importation, and the concomitant encroachment of her trade, France would soon become the greatest maritime power in Europe*; which, with her extraordinary inland advantages, would give her such a decided pre-eminence as might realize even the ambition of the 14th Louis, and invest her with uncontrolled and universal monarchy: that the supposed danger to her colonies, from the independence of ours, would not exist in so great a degree as their dependence, that is their union with England, creates; for that so united, they are stronger, and therefore more formidable to their neighbours: that the other danger apprehended, from the example of rebellion extending, and alluring by its success the colonies of other powers, is also groundless; for to make it real, it must be supposed that other colonies are similar in their nature to ours, capable of the same ideas, the same spirit, and the same conduct; constitutions must resemble, to be liable

to the same symptoms; whereas, in fact, no two things in nature or in art, can be more dissimilar than Boston, for instance, and a French or Spanish colony:—that no argument therefore can dissuade the house of Bourbon, or France particularly, but that many, both of interest and glory, impel her to wish America for ever severed from Great Britain.

These considerations, I confess, appear to me to have great weight; especially as they are opposed rather by ingenious than probable surmises; which seem to arise more from a wish to conquer America, than to save England: the former idea at least is uppermost. But it defeats itself in some of the arguments on this subject. It is said, for instance, that France must *object* to the independence of our colonies, in consideration of her own future security, for that America will have such advantages, when an independence of situation shall permit her to expand herself, that her superior power shall endanger any other country she may choose to oppress. This, you see, admits the extraordinary growing power of the continent, and her great capabilities within herself: an admission they by no means make, when in pursuit of their favourite idea, they allege the certainty of subduing her. It is said, and particularly by the Abbé Raynâl in his celebrated work of the European settlements in the Indies, that danger *would* arise to the French colonies from the independence of ours; for though, as before observed, united with England they be stronger, and therefore *might* be more formidable to France, yet they are clogged in their operations by that union: for England who has so many objects of care, so much to defend and so much to lose, in Asia and Africa, is obliged to attend to the balance

and to be content with it, without risking the ambition of attacks on the colonies of other states.

A little time will decide whether the French will be wise enough to embrace an opportunity, such as exceeds what our most sanguine enemies could wish, of gratifying their revenge, and as it appears from the above considerations, of promoting their interest. That they are able, Dr. Price attempts, and with some success, to prove in his last publication, "Additional Observations."—I suppose you have gotten it: but Price might have stated their ability in a still stronger point of view, if he had pushed the comparison between France, supported by America, and England deserted by her. Ability is a mere relative term; and takes its degree from the comparative situation of the parties.

The current opinion however, is very strong, that a general war is immediately imminent. Five prizes were sometime ago taken into Port l'Orient, by the American privateer, the Enterprize, (the same which had taken Franklin to France,) and these prizes it seems the French court are very slow in restoring; besides, the talk of an engagement between a French and English man of war, in which the latter was sunk; in short, there is an universal alarm. And Stocks, the grand criterion of public opinion have fallen three per cent. Every thing indeed conspires to justify the alarm, at least, of the ministerialists; for American affairs wear a complexion as unfavourable as those of Europe. The Hessian defeat at Trentown, though in itself a blow of great magnitude, was but the beginning of their sorrows. Ever since, the Americans have harassed and driven before them the dispersed and weakened mercenaries of Germany and England. So say the

best account; as much of them at least, as are permitted to transpire. The gazette even, acknowledged their military manœuvre, and a capital one it was, in getting round Cornwallis and intercepting the regiments which were advancing to his relief. A relief which he much wanted; for Mercer had offered him battle, which his lordship thought proper to decline. The fact was, they both out-fought and out-generalled our English braggadocios: and the news at present is, that they are masters of the Jerseys at least.

Where, or how, is this wretched country to procure even mercenary force to attempt another campaign? The expected aid from Wirtemberg, a famous military dukedom in Germany, it is said will disappoint *their purchasers*. Dr. Franklin I hear is gone to Vienna; having probably settled matters in the more southern climes; if not, Arthur Lee, (formerly agent here for the Massachusetts's) will complete them at Madrid, where he is negotiating. Sorely the accumulated calamities of this devoted land will at last rouse the people to a severe vengeance on the traitors, who by ignorant and wicked mis-administration have disgraced and ruined this country.

But it is more than time to conclude. I shall be very happy in hearing of, and from my friends in Belfast, whom I congratulate sincerely *on the perseverance of public spirit in our county: and the determination to carry in effect the constitutional measure of continuing to support our representative*. Do you ever see him? Assure him of my particular enquiries. I shall be happy in a future letter to contribute a hint towards perfecting the medal. It is an excellent idea.

Assure all my friends of my best

M M M

wishes and compliments, and believe me with best respects

Dear Sir, your's

Sincerely,

HUGH BOYD.

5th March, (for I was obliged to go out of town.)

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

IN the present ostentatious and expensive style of publication, nothing can be more useful, and ought to be more popular, than to have a *cheap conveyance of valuable truths*, such as your Magazine professes to be; a means of communicating information, which, at present, is, as it were, *hoarded*; not for the benefit of those who are willing, but only of those who are able to purchase costly books. The press is really secluded from the people by the high price of the manufacture. The ancient manuscript was perhaps as widely circulated, and as generally read as the modern publication. The other arts have indeed combined to adorn the art of printing, but the fatal effect of all these borrowed embellishments, is, to make the art itself, lose sight of its great object, and primary purpose, the diffusion of knowledge and the wide circulation of truth. That circulation grows more partial and confined, when authors are so drest up by milliner printers, as to be fascinated almost as much with the exterior ornament, as with the intrinsic worth of their performances. In pursuance of the idea of cheapening the commodity for the use of the vulgar as they are called, I request the insertion, in your next Magazine, of an extract from Malcolm Laing's History of Scotland, which gives an account of the origin, institutions and character of the INDEPENDENTS, a conspicuous sect and distinguished party. We are to judge whether this

religious party be extinct *at present* in the laity as well as the clergy, or whether the laity be still of their religious persuasion, and the clergy, as is the tendency of human nature, attached to an ecclesiastical government, in its various forms of presbyteries, associations northern and southern, or provincial synods, a church government verging every day more and more, from causes I mean not at present to investigate, into the form, the nature, the principles, and the practice of an establishment or alliance of church and state. R.

INDEPENDENTS.

EACH sect in its turn has explored the gospels, in quest of the primitive form of the christian church. The puritans discovered that bishops and presbyters, overseers and elders, were originally equal, and the terms interchangeable, till the first was appropriated to the president of a congregation or synod, elevated in due course of ecclesiastical usurpation, above his co-presbyters. But as each sect beholds its opinions faithfully reflected in the mirror of the gospels, a bolder class of enthusiasts, more impatient of intolerance, had found that before the institution of a regular presbytery, the congregations themselves were independent and equal. The apostolical churches planted in Jerusalem, Corinth and Ephesus, were regulated by pastors freely chosen; instructed occasionally by lay-prophets; and united only by the ties of charity and a common faith. According to this early, evangelical model, they rejected the indelible character of an established and distinct order of priesthood; placed the choice and admission of pastors in the congregation at large; indulged the indiscriminate exercise of preaching; and permitted an unrestrained secession whenever their numbers or their disquisitions required